

## Nurses of Note.

JOHANNA PAULINA REIJNVAAN.

*Lady Superintendent of the Wilhelmina Hospital, Amsterdam.*

IN one of his lectures on heroes and hero-worship Thomas Carlyle says that great men (men taken in the broadest sense of the word, and including also women) are profitable company, and that we cannot look upon a great man without gaining something by him. "He is the living light fountain, which it is good and pleasant to be near." These words involuntarily enter into my mind when thinking of the highly distinguished lady whose portrait is here offered to the readers of the NURSING RECORD. I do not know whether it is in England just the same as with us, but here in Holland we observe in the latest ten or twenty years a very rage for jubilees. There are physicians and actors and reverend gentlemen who have already celebrated several jubilees in their life—their twenty-five years' jubilee, their forty years' jubilee, their seventieth birthday, &c., &c.

Sometimes this rage for hero-worship in this way has been laughed at, frowned on, or simply declared to be stuff and nonsense. Aye, there may be something true in it; the laughers and the frowners, and the pitifully smiling new-lighters may be right in some way, and yet—let me go on with this form of hero-worship, although it may be often exaggerated. In our days of social evolution, of brutal demolition of so much that is dear and holy in the eyes of hundreds and thousands, the acknowledgment of the merits (perhaps modest merits) of our fellow men is a good, an elevating thing.

But the jubilee I wish to speak of does not at all belong to the above-mentioned category.

For all those who take a lively interest in sick-nursing the 17th of November was a real feast.

Twelve years and a half have passed since the day on which Johanna Paulina Reijnvaan entered upon the function of Lady Superintendent of the Buiten Gasthuis, now Wilhelmina Hospital. Since that time a new era has begun for the Nursing of the sick poor in our city, in our whole country. It is she who has brought about a total revolution in our Dutch Nursing world.

When she resolved to devote her further life to the care of suffering humanity, the average Nurse, at least

in the two city hospitals (we do not speak here of a limited number of private Nurses and deaconesses), was of the Sarah Gamp type so wonderfully described by the mighty pen of your immortal Dickens.

It is largely owing to the influence of Miss Reijnvaan, effectually assisted by Dr. van Deventer, at that time Medical Superintendent of the Buiten Gasthuis, that a blessed change has been brought on in this regard.

Stimulated by her example, a great number of distinguished highly educated women have since then given themselves to the Nursing of the sick; and to her energy, her noble zeal and indefatigable activity we must ascribe the fact that in our days a staff of well-trained Nurses is working in the two city-hospitals.

That her charming character, her winning kindness and benevolence, her cheerfulness and sympathetic heart have also much contributed to the success of her noble efforts, will surely be affirmed by all that know and love her, for knowing her includes loving her.

Miss Reijnvaan is a living proof of the far-reaching power of personal influence, the result of a strong will, a clear intellect and a high soul.

Born on the 5th of April, 1844, at Amsterdam, of an ancient patrician family, Miss Reijnvaan revealed in the days of her early childhood that resoluteness, that mind for taking the initiative, by which she has afterwards so blessedly distinguished herself. Although fate had placed her in easy circumstances there was always in her a burning desire to make herself useful.

In the year 1870, when the news of the breaking-

out of the war between France and Germany was written in fire over all the European sky, she too was touched by that noble enthusiasm which took possession of so many youthful hearts, and only the disapproval of a dearly loved and revered father prevented her from joining the ambulance of the Red Cross. Still, her inclination towards sick Nursing remained the same.

In 1880, after having followed a course in that branch of science, given by Dr. Blocker, she passed her examination for Nurse, and obtained the testimonial of the "White Cross." In order to perfect her training, she was for some time actively working as non-residing (extern) Nurse in the Binnen-Gasthuis, the other of the two City hospitals. Soon afterwards she exchanged that Institution for the private hospital of Dr. Berns, where she made herself the more and more conversant



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